

The Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

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July 4, 2014

Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

“For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.” [Romans 7.22-23]

In the Name of Christ + Jesus our Lord

On premier holiday weekend of this country's emergence into world's life two hundred thirty-eight years ago, it is bit difficult for Lord's baptized people to pull away from all festivities / step into his presence this Saturday evening / Sunday morning

While we may want to remain in reduced work schedules, in patriotic music / firework displays, in special gatherings with families / friends, in local festivals, we need to remember that Lord's people are in their annual / vital journey through six months of Pentecost

This lengthy time gives us numerous opportunities to see how Lord's Life makes its way into our own / deepens relationship we have with him / one another

Have you noticed how our conversations with others tend to fill with complaints?

Entering into broad areas of weather, politics / religion, it does not take long for us to describe (usually in negative manner) how our expectations are not being met:

- Some of us expect rain from hurricane
- Some of us expect politicians to work with ethical attitudes / actions
- Some of us expect parish communities to reflect Life of Holy Trinity

Why is it important to make this observation?

Because in today's Gospel Jesus is commenting how people around him are group of complainers!

People to whom he is bringing his Life have all these expectations, but people like himself / John Baptizer are not matching those expectations!

He cites two examples:

- We played flute for you, / you did not dance!
- We sang funeral song, / you did not mourn!

Jesus then notices how that complaining extends to Baptizer / to himself

John shows up as preparer for Messiah, watching carefully how much he eats / drinks.../ people say he has demon!

Jesus appears as Son of Man, One who is world's Redeemer, One who is indifferent to what he eats / drinks.../ people tell others to look at him, describing him as glutton / drunkard, friend of tax collectors / sinners!

Jesus responds mysteriously by stating that wisdom is justified by her deeds

Remember that, in OT, wisdom, especially in Proverbs, is described as being of Lord God

Jesus' point is that in works of both Baptizer / Son of Man people can see Lord God unpacking world's salvation

People in his generation, however, do not see works leading to that salvation / , further, are huge complainers about way salvation is being unpacked

Jesus presses this point home in prayer to his Father as he thanks him for hiding these things from those people

What are "these things?"

Working through Matthew's first ten chapters, they include:

- Blind people receiving their sight
- Lame people walking again
- Lepers being cleansed
- Deaf people hearing
- Dead people being raised
- Good News being brought to poor individuals
- People being blessed because they are not offended by Jesus

Jesus is thankful that Father has hidden "these things" from people who believe themselves to be wise / understanding

He is thankful that Father is revealing them, instead, to little children (remember from last Sunday's Gospel, "little children" are not just young people, phrase describes his followers)

It is striking, too, that Jesus points to Father as Lord of heaven / earth

Father's Life, despite pretensions of world's gods, is most dominant reality in this world

It has always been Father's intent to draw world's people, despite their self-centeredness, despite their rebellion / despite their ignorance, to draw them back into his Life

In his prayer Jesus states that everything has been handed over to him by Father (this is so world's rescue can be accomplished)

He also states that no one can know Father except Son / anyone to whom Jesus chooses to reveal Father (this is why Jesus bringing Father's Life to world through his ministry that concludes in his dying, rising / ascending)

Jesus then startles us with both invitation to his Life / his description of it!

He invites those who are weary / heavily burdened to come to him so he can give them his rest

Most of us are not around animals anymore that are yoked together (we're most familiar with dogs / cats, yoking does not come easily to them!)

But we are aware of draft horses, such as Belgians or Clydesdales (they are nearly six feet tall / weigh around two thousand pounds!)

These huge horses are braced or harnessed together in pairs of two, four, six or eight

Yoking joins them together, enabling them to work better with much more support / strength

If these horses aren't yoked together, their work will not be efficient

They will go in different ways, their attitudes / their energies canceling one another out

People in this world who are weary / heavily burdened are that way because they insist on living for themselves, on being their own person!

But, if they recognize how ground down they are / let their lives slide under / into Lord's Life, they will be given energy / their burdens lifted in that rescuing turn

Key, though, is whether they will be obedient to themselves or to Lord God who desires to give them his Life

Once we let ourselves be obedient to Lord God, we will see how easy / light it is to be turned to him

This turning takes people who blindly thought that life was only what is given at birth...now they see Life given at Baptism

This turning takes people whose lame lives wobbled / lurched as they followed their desires / obsessions...now they are striding out as Lord's sons / daughters

This turning takes people whose dirtied lives had separated them from others / forced them to live among their own kind...now they have been cleansed by Lord God / can interact with all kinds of people

This turning takes people who used to hear only what they were saying...now they can hear Lord when he speaks to them

This turning takes people whose lives had shut down so much they were like being dead...now they have been revived by Lord God / have Life in front of them filled with purpose now / finding completion in eternity

This turning takes people who used to think they could / had to stand on their own...now they realize how dependent they are on Lord God / are immensely satisfied

This turning takes people who used to be turned off by Lord God when he pushed into their lives...now they welcome him with open arms / kneel in his presence

Such turning, which occurs now, is hidden from those individuals who are extremely wrapped up in themselves

Instead, Father, Son / Holy Spirit choose to reveal their rescue to those people who are wearied / heavily burdened by demands / realities of living in this world

Through works of both Baptizer / Son of Man people can now see Lord God unpacking world's salvation

Further, through realities of Lord's Scriptures / Sacraments, he is always turning us from life given us by world at birth to Life given us by Lord at Baptism

This turning pulls us away from festivities of premier holiday weekend

This turning frees us from complaining that comes so naturally to us

This turning deepens relationship that Lord God has established with us / with one another through Son's dying, rising / ascending!

Now may the peace of the Lord God, which is beyond all understanding, keep our hearts and minds through Christ + Jesus our Lord